

PBCHI Case Study of a Trauma Survivor: Alana

Alana is a 43 year old, single female who has a significant trauma history and has recently moved to your area. There are parts of her history that she remembers clearly and other events that are shadowy and vague. She is aware of several incidents of sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect as well as significant bullying. Alana is confused about her sexual identity and has never had an intimate relationship with male or female other than the abuse she suffered at the hands of both sexes. She is currently on psychiatric disability and has an Axis I (Bipolar Disorder) and Axis II (Borderline Personality Disorder) mental illness diagnosis. She has been in a rehab program for alcohol abuse several years ago and continues to engage in binge drinking. She has been on medication for her mental health issues with significant side effects but she discontinued treatment with her psychiatrist 6 months ago. She refuses to have blood tests or to seek primary care services.

Alana has not had a physical exam since she fulfilled college requirements. This includes OB/GYN care. She went to the emergency room for severe back pain twice but left before an exam was performed. She has a significant skin condition that has never been diagnosed and treated. She is very bright and up until the back pain occurred five years ago she was able to function in her life, active in her synagogue, her community, and athletics and was employed fulltime as a physical education teacher in a private school. Alana does not have a strong support system except for a close relationship with her 48 year old brother who allows her to stay in his basement apartment. He insists that Alana get treatment and is most concerned about her restlessness at night and angry outbursts. He convinces her to seek help with your agency and she agrees to be enrolled in the PBHCI program.

Discussion Questions

What systems do you have in place that would address Alana's needs?

How likely is it that you will explore her trauma history?

What would your agency do to assure that Alana received appropriate medical care using trauma-informed approaches?